

December 2022

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Upcoming Events

December 2022

World AIDS Day

December 1

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 3

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 7

Human Rights Day/Week

December 10/4-10

Bill of Rights Day

December 15

Hanukkah

December 18–26

Yule

December 21–January 1

Christmas

December 25

Kwanzaa

December 26–January 1

ORMDI

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

You can contact ORMDI toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TDD/TTY, dial 711 before providing this number) and speak with a specialist regarding equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaint processing or harassment prevention. You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office. The harassment prevention procedures do not affect rights under the EEO complaint process. Harassment should be reported immediately to a manager or supervisor, Harassment Prevention Coordinator, or the Harassment Prevention Program. For Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services, email the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer ADR team at workplaceadr@va.gov.



Commemorate

Human Rights Day and Week, and Bill of Rights Day

VA joins the Nation in commemorating Human Rights Week beginning December 4, Human Rights Day on December 10, and Bill of Rights Day on December 15.

Human Rights Week begins the Sunday before Human Rights Day, an annual observance marking December 10, 1948, the day that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

From the [2021 Presidential Proclamation](#): “In the wake of the devastation of the Second World War, leaders from around the world came together with a shared vision to promote a safer future for all nations by securing and advancing the human rights of everyone, everywhere. On December 10, 1948, thanks to the moral leadership and service of [former first lady of the United States] Eleanor Roosevelt as the first Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, the world took an enormous step forward with the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)...The UDHR enshrines the human rights and fundamental freedoms inherent in all people — no matter who they are, where they come from, or whom they love.”

Bill of Rights Day, on December 15, is national celebration of “the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, which spell out our rights as Americans. It guarantees civil rights and liberties such as freedom of speech, press, and religion. It sets rules for due process of law and reserves all powers not delegated to the Federal Government to the people or the states” ([National Archives](#)). Visit the National Archives for resources on the Bill of Rights.



DAS Johnson

Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion

The virtual Aspiring Supervisor Program (vASP) is now accepting applications through December 2. Only the first 500 who apply and receive supervisory validation in the Talent Management System 2.0 are accepted.

vASP is a three-month, online program encompassing a mix of team building, individual and one-on-one exercises aimed at providing you exploration into the roles and responsibilities of VA supervisors. You will participate in discussions and assignments focusing on weekly topics such as communication, accountability and building trust; engage in live, 90-minute weekly webinars exploring weekly topics in depth; complete an electronic development plan to create personal goals and identify skill gaps; and connect with a current VA supervisor through a mentorship program, gaining a personalized perspective into their daily job duties. For a full list of program dates, eligibility requirements and additional information, or for the vASP SharePoint site address, contact the Human Capital Services Center at vasp@va.gov.

The Tenth Annual Secretary's D&I Excellence and ADR Excellence Awards

Congratulations to the Winners!

ORMDI and the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer are proud to announce the winners of the Tenth Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Excellence Awards! These awards recognize the outstanding work of VA employees and teams who have achieved sustained successes in the areas of D&I and ADR.

This year, the Secretary's D&I Excellence Award is awarded in four categories. The awardees are:

- **James Leahy**, Executive Director, Veterans Canteen Service Central Office; St. Louis, Missouri; Veterans Health Administration (VHA) (Category: Manager/Supervisor)
- **Heather Michelle Owens**, Executive Secretary to the Associate Director for Operations, Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center; Walla Walla, Washington; VHA (Category: Nonsupervisory Employee)
- **Dr. Kaela Joseph**, Staff Psychologist, San Francisco VA Health Care System, California (Category: Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity & Inclusion Practitioner)
- **Development, Security and Operations Chief of Staff Office Team (Renee McDonald, Gail Bovy, Darryl Dunlap, Sheila Crowe, Michael Salazar, Kelly Bonser, and Jason Griesbaum)**, Office of Information and Technology (Category: Team)

This year, the ADR Excellence Award is being awarded in five categories. The awardees are:

- **Neil Deol**, Trial Attorney, Office of General Counsel (OGC) District Contract Law National Practice Group; Portland, Oregon (Category: ADR Effort by a Non-ADR Program Employee)
- **Tiyanna Payne**, Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program Manager, Battle Creek VA Medical Center, Michigan, VHA (Category: ADR Effort by a Non-ADR Program Manager/Supervisor)
- **Wayne Campbell**, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Assistant, EEO/ADR Program Office, Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center; Indianapolis, Indiana; VHA (Category: ADR Effort by a Collateral Duty Certified Neutral)
- **Contract Litigation Team (Harold Askins III, Tyler Brown, Laetitia Coleman, Neil Deol, David Fagan, Jennifer Hedge, Jared Levin, Mary Mitchell, Natica Neely, Brent Niles, Kenitra Price, Kathleen Ramos and Marcus Woodard)**, OGC District Contract Law National Practice Group; Denver, Colorado (Category: ADR Effort by an Office of General Counsel Employee or Group)
- **Detroit EEO/ADR Program (Fred L. Harris III, Zenia Berry, Lisa Olney, Wendy Myers-Cromwell, and Carolyn Hannah)**, John D. Dingell VA Medical Center, Michigan, VHA (Category: ADR Effort by Workplace ADR Program within a Facility—TIE)
- **Palo Alto EEO/ADR Program (Timothy Langford and Brenda Piggue)**, Palo Alto VA Medical Center, California, VHA (Category: ADR Effort by Workplace ADR Program within a Facility—TIE)

A video highlighting the accomplishments of the awardees will be shared on the [D&I Excellence Awards webpage](#) and the [ADR Excellence Awards webpage](#) in the coming weeks. Congratulations to all of the award winners for their outstanding achievements in support of D&I and ADR!

Veteran and Military Spouse Talent Engagement Program

Promoting and Supporting Veteran and Military Spouse Employment Across VA

Employing Veterans and Military Spouses at VA is a large part of our mission to serve transitioning service members, Veterans, and their families. According to the Office of Personnel Management, the percentage of federal employees with Veteran status has remained stable over the last five years at 31% across all federal agencies. While the current unemployment rate for Veterans is 2.4%, the unemployment rate for military spouses is an overwhelming 22%. (Veteran status indicates whether an individual is a Veteran as defined by 38 U.S.C. 101—i.e., a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable).

Transitioning service members, Veterans and military spouses, survivors, caregivers, and other family members should view VA as their **Employer of Choice**. Across the federal government, VA should lead other agencies to follow suit and hire those who are so committed to service.

When VA provides a stable career for a military spouse or transitioning service member, it creates financial security for the entire family, and helps to overcome mental health, homelessness, food insecurity, and caregiving challenges often faced in our Veteran community. Ultimately, a career in VA introduces the Veteran or spouse to all the wrap-around services VA offers.

VA is dedicated to hiring Veterans and military spouses and is committed to being the leader in federal government hiring Veterans and military spouses as the Employer of Choice. Recently, VA launched the Veteran and Military Spouse Talent Engagement Program (VMSTEP) led by Executive Director Cheryl Mason. She is building a team that will focus our resources on the priorities to meet our mission. Executive Director Cheryl Mason stated “we are focusing on making VA the employer of choice for Veteran and Military Spouses, survivors, caregivers, and family members by supporting the Administrations and staff offices with outreach and marketing about hiring events, facilitating, and encouraging hiring events with our external partners, and providing training to hiring managers on all the hiring authorities available – stay tuned – more to come.”

To recruit Veterans and military spouses, VMSTEP is collaborating and working across the VA to coordinate and participate in job fairs for transitioning service members, Veterans, and military spouses. VMSTEP will be providing information and support on all available hiring authorities for Veterans, military spouses, survivors, and family members. To recruit and retain transitioning service members, Veterans and military spouses, VA is looking at a wide variety of workforce solutions. Workforce solutions that are portable, hybrid, and flexible allow military spouses to continue their career throughout relocations and support military readiness. All Federal agencies need to be culturally competent and see the vast experience, perspective, education, and talent that Veterans and military spouses can bring to their agency. VA’s mission directly embodies caring for those who shall have borne the battle and for the widow, and orphan.

By working to create portable, hybrid, and flexible workforce solutions, military spouses will be able to continue their careers throughout relocations and deployments, while transitioning service members will find new careers to expand their skillset.

To retain and promote Veterans at higher rates, VA must first fully embrace inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access that hiring, retaining, and promoting Veterans brings. Veterans, military spouses, survivors, caregivers, and their family members are all heroes. They bring the talent, experience, perspective, background, loyalty, and understanding to VA to best serve their fellow heroes.

VA is creating new relationships as well as establishing a VMSTEP Partnership Consortium and strengthening our existing partnerships. VA is a part of the DoD Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP), advertising open positions that MSEP highlights at hiring fairs and events. VA has a long-standing partnership with the Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, which has many Veteran and military spouse employment initiatives. VA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation: Hiring Our Heroes to drive military spouse employment in the federal space and collaborate with other Federal agencies. First Lady Dr. Jill Biden established the White House Joining Forces Initiative to oversee the impact of the Federal Military Spouse Non-Competitive Hiring Authority and directly challenged the federal government to be the employer of choice for military spouses.

VMSTEP is also reaching out and working to collaborate with our VA partners in the Administrations and Staff offices.

To learn more, visit the [VMSEP website](#) or contact Ms. Mason.

Commemorate

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

International Day of Persons with Disabilities was first proclaimed by the United Nations on December 3, 1992. This annual observance aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities while also increasing awareness of their international situation in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The 2022 theme is “Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fueling an accessible and equitable world” ([United Nations](#)). For more information, visit [VA’s Individuals with Disabilities Employment Program webpage](#).



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities
3 DECEMBER

People with Disabilities and Targeted Disabilities Barrier Analysis

ORMDI and MITRE Partner to Identify and Eliminate Barriers

Have you ever wondered what agencies do with all the demographic data they collect? We analyze it. VA has an obligation to continuously take steps to prevent discrimination. One way we do that is by conducting a barrier analysis. A barrier is an agency policy, procedure, practice or condition that limits or tends to limit employment opportunities for members of a protected class. The purpose of a barrier analysis is to identify and eliminate barriers thereby ensuring equal access for all applicants and employees no matter their background.

This year, ORMDI has partnered with MITRE, a federally funded research and development center, to conduct a barrier analysis of people with disabilities (PWD) and targeted disabilities (PWTD) in higher graded positions (GS-11 through SES). An individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. There are 12 targeted disabilities (developmental disability, traumatic brain injury, deaf or serious difficulty hearing, blind or serious difficulty seeing, missing extremities, significant mobility impairment, partial or complete paralysis, epilepsy or other seizure disorders, intellectual disability, significant psychiatric disorder, dwarfism, and significant disfigurement) for which there are special emphasis in affirmative action programs.

At the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, only 9.51% of VA’s permanent full-time workforce was PWD in grades GS-11 through SES and 1.54% of the workforce was PWTD in the same grade cluster. The goal is to have 12% of the workforce in each grade cluster be PWD and 2% PWTD. This less than favorable representation goes back at least to FY 2018.

The barrier analysis will include a rigorous quantitative analysis, high-level policy and process analysis, benchmark analysis, as well as qualitative data from employee interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The findings from these analyses will provide evidence-based recommendations for eliminating identified barriers that hinder PWD and PWTD from being represented in higher graded positions. For more information about this barrier analysis, contact ORMDI’s Workforce Analysis team at VABarrierAnalysis@va.gov.

Training

VA Cyber Harassment Video

Are you a victim of cyberbullying or cyber harassment? Are you a perpetrator? Learn what constitutes both, the differences between them, and how to stop it. Think before you speak, speak up if you witness inappropriate behavior, and seek help from your chain of command or ORMDI when witnessing microaggression. Checkout the newest [VA Cyber Harassment video](#) developed by VA’s Offices of Information Security and Information Technology Workforce Development.



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U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW (08) | Washington, DC 20420